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ABSTRACT

This volume is third in a series of 10 publications intended to provide practical or trend-oriented information related to serving children and youth with mental retardation, autism, and other developmental disabilities. Chapter 1 discusses the history of characters with mental retardation or developmental disabilities in children's literature. Chapter 2 highlights the positive portrayal of characters with mental retardation or developmental disabilities in quality children's literature. Current trends and values are discussed, as well as general aspects of quality literature and illustrations in children's books. Chapter 3 discusses strategies for using children's books that include characters with mental retardation or developmental disabilities, including concept infusion and guided discussion techniques. The rest of the book includes appendices with annotated bibliographies of fictional picture books and fictional chapter books, activities for using children's literature including characters with mental retardation or developmental disabilities, and an explanation of the Dolly Gray Children's Literature Award. Annotated bibliographies include information on the content regarding mental retardation or developmental disabilities and content regarding other curricular areas. Each book is rated in its quality. (Contains 10 references.) (CR)

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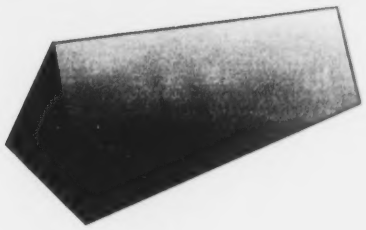

MRDD
Prism
Series
Volume 3

Developmental Disability in Children's Literature

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by Tina Taylor Dyches and
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MRDD Prism Series

The Board of Directors of the Division on Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities of the Council for Exceptional Children is pleased to offer its third publication of the **Prism Series**. Each volume in the series is intended to provide practical or trend-oriented information related to serving children and youth with mental retardation, autism, and other developmental disabilities.

We thank Dr. Tina Taylor Dyches and Dr. Mary Anne Prater for writing this third volume of our ten volume series. We are certain that readers will find the information and perspective offered in **Developmental Disability in Children's Literature** of significant value.

Series Editor,
Laurence Sargent

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Developmental Disability in Children's Literature

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Volume 3

Developmental Disability in Children's Literature

Issues and Bibliography

by Tina Taylor Dyches
and Mary Anne Prater

A Publication of
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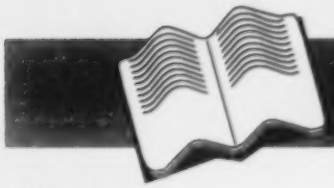
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE: ISSUES AND ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY



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CHAPTER

1

HISTORY OF CHARACTERS WITH MRDD IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Including characters with mental retardation/developmental disabilities (MRDD) in children's literature is a relatively recent phenomenon. However, characterization of individuals with disabilities in general may be found throughout the ages in all types of literature. Historically, authors used characters with disabilities in their stories for several reasons, two of which included: (a) for literary purposes, and (b) to reflect societal attitudes.

Literary Purposes

Authors of adult classical literature often used characters with disabilities metaphorically to represent inner character traits. Sometimes the physical "flaw" represented evil attributes; other times, they represented goodness. For example, Captain Ahab in Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* (1851) was obsessed with pursuing the White Whale that deprived him of a leg. In Somerset Maughm's *Of Human Bondage* (1915), Philip's clubfoot symbolized his bitter, confused, and warped nature. Yet, other disfigured characters represented goodness and kindness, such as Victor Hugo's hunchback in *Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1831) and Edmond Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1897).

Classical literature that is over 100 years old, but still well-known by today's children, portrays characters with disabilities as evil, subhuman, superhuman, pitiful, or overly virtuous. For example, the Grimm brothers collected and published folk tales in the early 19th century that portrayed deformed witches with poor eyesight who were evil. Yet, the "crippled" Tiny Tim in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* (1843) represented goodness and kindness. And the physical attributes of Carlo Collodi's *Pinocchio* (1883) were tied directly to his honesty in that he became progressively more

disfigured as his integrity slipped. One would expect that physical attributes representing inner attributes in today's literature would be viewed as stereotypical, unacceptable, and politically incorrect.

Reflection of Society

In addition to the use of characters for literary purposes, the manner in which society perceives individuals with disabilities also affects the way they are portrayed in literature. If society perceives them as subhuman, authors portray them as needing custodial care. If one pities them, they will be portrayed as recipients of charity. If viewed as a menace to society or ill, then isolation, segregation or unnecessary therapy may be warranted. If individuals with disabilities are perceived as having more in common with those without disabilities, they will be viewed in integrated, inclusive ways. "Society" within this context may be historical, cultural, or both.

The times in which a portrayal is set help determine how the characterization is portrayed. In historical fiction characterizations of those with disabilities reflect societal beliefs of the time. *Johnny Tremain*, for example, takes place during the Revolutionary War. Johnny loses the use of one of his hands and must change his professional aspirations, as well as combat attitudes about cosmetic injuries. In *Sing Down the Moon*, Tall Boy develops an orthopedic impairment and in his Navajo culture can no longer become a brave.

Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities

Historically, more books were written for adults and children that contained characters with orthopedic and sensory impairments than any other type of disability. Proportionately speaking, fewer books were written that included characters with mental retardation. A few classical books come to mind, such as John Steinbeck's *Of Mice or Men* (1937), Daniel Keyes' *Flowers for Algernon* (1966), and Pearl S. Buck's book about her own child with mental retardation (*The Child Who Never Grew*, 1950). All of these books, however, were written in the 20th century.

Today, many portrayals of individuals with mental retardation and developmental disabilities (MRDD) may be found not only in books, but also in various media forms. The power of the media in creating images of those with disabilities in the minds of children and

adolescents cannot be overestimated. In fact, Tiny Tim, Pinocchio, and various folk tale characters are better known for their movie and television "appearances" than from the written word. The same could be said about all of the books mentioned thus far. Several movie versions of the books *Of Mice or Men, Hunchback of Notre Dame,* and *Moby Dick*, among others, have been produced. Many viewers of the movie *Charlie* did not know it was a book (*Flowers for Algernon*) before it became the movie. The same can be said about the recent Academy Award winning movie, *Forrest Gump*.

During the 1990's, several movies and television programs have depicted individuals with MRDD (e.g., *Forrest Gump, Nell, The Other Sister, Something About Mary, What's Eating Gilbert Grape?, L.A. Law, Life Goes On*). Some have received praise for representing appropriate and realistic portrayals (e.g., *Life Goes On*, *What's Eating Gilbert Grape?*), while others have been criticized for stereotyping or creating unrealistic characterizations (e.g., *Something About Mary, Forrest Gump*).

Although there are some positive portrayals of persons with MRDD in the movies, contemporary images of individuals with cognitive disabilities that are familiar to children and adolescents may carry the same metaphors typically seen in classical literature. Readers and moviegoers pull for *Forrest Gump* knowing that he is at a disadvantage and yet, amazingly he experiences a superhuman life. Raymond, an autistic savant in *Rainman*, demonstrates both subhuman and superhuman skills. Although autistic savants do exist, they represent a very small percentage of individuals with autism; thus, most moviegoers came away thinking all individuals with autism are like Raymond.

Portrayals of characters with physical and sensory impairments continue to dominate children's literature. There has been, however, an increase in the number of published books with characters with mental retardation and autism over the last few decades. Previous writers have published annotated bibliographies (Baskin & Harris, 1977; Baskin & Harris, 1984; Robertson, 1992) describing children's fiction books that feature characters with mental retardation. Twelve children's books with a character with mental retardation were published during the 1960's, 26 in the 1970's, and 29 in the 1980's. Fewer books characterized individuals with autism. One was

published in the 1960's, five in the 1970's, and two in the 1980's. Based on our review of fiction chapter and picture books published during the 1990's, the number of books characterizing individuals with mental retardation has not increased since the last decade (n=28), but fictionalized portrayals of individuals with autism increased from one in the 1960's to nine in the 1990's. We hope to see not only an increase in the number of books, but increased portrayals of best practice integrated throughout engaging stories and stunning illustrations.

Chapter
2

POSITIVE PORTRAYAL OF CHARACTERS WITH MRDD IN QUALITY CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

The trend toward including individuals with mental retardation/ developmental disabilities (MRDD) in mainstream society is impacting their treatment in children's literature. During the past decade, authors have depicted children with MRDD who are living in their families' homes rather than in institutions, attending neighborhood schools rather than specialized schools, and having a variety of friends rather than having no friends (or only friends with similar disabilities). Although positive portrayals of characters with MRDD can be found in some children's books, the inclusion of these characters in quality literature is rare (Blaska, 1996), and sometimes these characters are not depicted accurately, or the portrayal is not consistent with current trends. This chapter will briefly discuss current values and trends in MRDD and general aspects of quality literature and illustrations in children's books.

Current Trends and Values in MRDD

When the *Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975* was passed, school-aged persons with MRDD gained a right to free, appropriate public education. Prior to this landmark legislation, many of these individuals were not considered to be worthy of publicly-funded education, and they were merely housed and cared for at individual or private expense. At this time, many found it incomprehensible that individuals with MRDD could benefit from an academic curriculum, gain and maintain employment, and develop meaningful relationships. Since this legislation was enacted 25 years ago, successful, productive, and happy lives for many individuals with MRDD are not implausible, but a reality. With appropriate education and support, dreams are being realized, and individuals with MRDD are living in normalized environments and participating in natural

activities of daily life with diverse groups of family members, friends, acquaintances, and support personnel.

As individuals with MRDD gain presence in everyday settings, the general population needs to look beyond the outdated myths and learn to accept and value the unique contributions of all members of society. Turnbull, Turnbull, Shank, and Leal (1999) have outlined six values to guide interactions with persons with disabilities. When these values are present in children's literature, outdated views and prejudices can be overcome, and readers can gain a greater understanding of the diversity of the human experience. These values include (a) envisioning great expectations, (b) enhancing positive contributions, (c) building on strengths, (d) acting on choices, (e) expanding relationships, and (f) ensuring full citizenship. Each of these values is discussed in the following sections.

Envisioning Great Expectations

Rather than letting disability labels predict outcomes for individuals with MRDD, significant others can envision great outcomes, then develop and implement ways to achieve them. Using "people-first" language is one way this can be facilitated. Rather than describing a child by her disability (e.g., "the retarded girl"), people can refer to the person first; then, if the disability is relevant to the discussion, it can be mentioned (e.g., "Susan, the girl who has mental retardation"). When individuals label persons in society, stereotypes may be formed that limit the expectations of and progress demonstrated by these persons.

Enhancing Positive Contributions

People with MRDD can be contributing members of society, not merely recipients of others' charity, patience, and service. People with MRDD may exhibit skills, knowledge, and attitudes that are truly valued by members of their communities. They should not be limited to a particular placement for their education (e.g., self-contained schools), employment (e.g., sheltered workshop), or social activities (e.g., special recreation) as a result of their label. Limiting them by their disability label may not allow individuals with MRDD to explore hidden talents or fulfill unrealized dreams. When the strengths, interests, and motivations of each individual with MRDD are taken

into account, placement and other decisions can be made to enhance his or her potential to positively contribute to society.

Building On Strengths

When members of society look beyond disabilities or labels and get to know the person with MRDD as an individual, it may become evident that all people have strengths and capabilities to be valued. Looking for strengths within the individual rather than comparing him or her with non-disabled peers can promote a positive, empowering image.

Acting On Choices

Our right as humans is to make choices that guide our lives. These choices should be available to individuals with MRDD and their families. Freedom to choose should be balanced by acceptance of the consequences of one's choices. People with MRDD should not be sheltered from making difficult decisions; they should be taught to make good choices and learn to accept the consequences of their decisions. These choices could include friends, group associations, attire, leisure activities, and occupations. In the past, such choices have often been made by significant others in the lives of persons with MRDD.

Expanding Relationships

Building and maintaining social networks is an essential dimension of the human experience. Often individuals with MRDD are surrounded by people who are obligated to be with them, either by familial connection (e.g., parents, siblings, cousins) or by a financial connection (e.g., people who are paid to be in the individual's life, such as teachers, therapists, and respite care providers). These relationships are often one-sided: that is, one person is the giver, the other is the receiver. In reciprocal relationships the connection is not necessarily bound by familial or financial ties, and both parties benefit from the relationship. Individuals with MRDD have a right to expand their circles of relationships in such a manner.

Ensuring Full Citizenship

Individuals with MRDD have the right to be respected as citizens of the communities in which they live. They should have the opportunity to choose their educational, occupational, and social

environments, and the levels and types of supports that they receive. They should be respected members of society, enjoying the benefits of full citizenship that they would have received if they had not had disabilities. Many individuals with MRDD are not even allowed *basic rights* taken for granted by non-disabled persons (e.g., being an informed consumer, voting, owning property, moving freely, being able to produce offspring, and being free from violence and abuse).

These six values are not necessarily bound to individuals with MRDD. Because values are ideals that people hold individually, it is obvious that not everyone who interacts with individuals with MRDD will respect these values. Further, there are additional values that may guide interactions between individuals. However, it appears to be a universally-accepted belief that all humans should be treated with love, respect, and honor for their individuality. Regarding these values in the portrayal of characters with MRDD may become paramount when evaluating children's literature. These values can be depicted in text as well as illustrations.

Quality Literature Portraying MRDD

How often has the statement been made, "I know a good book when I read one"? This leads to the question, "What makes a quality book?" Jacobs and Tunnell (1996) suggest that a good book is one that is regarded for its literary quality or one that readers enjoy. Readers' responses to books are often based upon the author's ability to let readers "live through" the experiences portrayed in the book. Powerful books often do this by taking the reader to distant or exciting places with new experiences, or by connecting the reader to something that is important in his or her life (Jacobs & Tunnell, 1996). So, when a reader is moved by a book, regardless of literary quality, it may be considered a "good book." It could be inferred then, that a book that is of high literary quality and to which the reader connects is an excellent book for that particular reader.

Children's literature experts often agree that at least six elements should be considered when determining the quality of any given book: (a) theme, (b) characterization, (c) setting, (d) plot, (e) point of view, and (f) style. Each of these elements will be discussed briefly. Yet it is important to remember that in judging children's books, only one list of "best books" is complete. As Jacobs & Tunnell (1996) noted, "The only list that you can trust without reservation is your own." (p. 19)

Theme

The theme of a book answers the question, "What is the main concept of the book?" The theme is an abstract concept embedded in the story that teaches a lesson or persuades the reader to accept an idea or a value (Sawyer, 2000). Themes in literature for young children are often direct and obvious, whereas in adolescent literature they are subtle, unfolding with the telling of the story, with layers of themes adding depth and dimension to the plot and characters.

Characterization

Characterization answers the question, "What are the people like?" Quality characterization includes main and supporting characters who are fully developed in many ways. They are credible, consistent, multidimensional, and ever-growing.

Credible characters are those who seem like they could be your next-door neighbors. A reader can identify with them: "I know someone like that," or, "I am kind of like that sometimes!"

Characters who are consistent are true to their nature and roles in thoughts, words, actions, language, and expressions (Sawyer, 2000). Readers are more likely to bond with characters who are consistent. Although a character may appear to behave unlike his/her natural inclinations at times, quality characterization demonstrates that this is contrary to the character's true identity, and the seeming inconsistency may be a reflection of a period of growth in the character.

Multidimensional characters are developed with many unique attributes. Characterization should not focus on one aspect of a character, such as ability, sex, race, religion, or age, but on many attributes. These attributes can be both *external* (i.e., those perceived with the senses), or *internal* (i.e, those perceived by knowing the thoughts, feelings, and opinions of others). Multidimensional characterization avoids stereotypical portrayals by describing the depth and breadth of the nature of the character.

Quality characterization portrays individuals who are not stagnant. Characters grow and develop reasonably throughout the story, but

"the character should not become a totally different character as a result of the experience in the story" (Sawyer, 2000, p. 52).

Settings

The settings included in the book answer the question, "What were the conditions when the story took place?" Minimally, settings should provide enough detail to describe where and when the characters lived. Enriched descriptions of settings also include portrayals of cultural aspects, moral tone, financial conditions, ethical challenges, and social tone (Sawyer, 2000). Settings should enhance the story by providing details that allow readers to feel as if they have "entered" the story and can navigate their way around the characters' worlds.

Plot

The plot answers the question, "What happened in the story?" It has been suggested that the plot is the "road map" which allows the reader to follow the story from beginning to end (Sawyer, 2000).

Young readers enjoy simple and predictable plots, but more complex plots are necessary to capture the attention of adolescent readers. A more complicated plot should clearly unfold with a story that seems reasonable for the characters and settings. An engaging plot captures the reader's attention by presenting a conflict that the reader can relate to or care about, then more clearly defines the conflict as the reader becomes emotionally involved in the story. Tension is built toward the end of the story, often creating suspense for the resolution of the conflict. In complex children's literature, new twists and false endings may be presented. The resolution of the conflict follows the climax, or highest point in dramatic tension (Sawyer, 2000). In children's literature, it is appropriate for the child to solve the problem without relying extensively on adults.

Point of view

The point of view answers the question, "Through whose eyes is the story being told?" Often children's literature presents the child's perspective, with the story either told in the words and thoughts of the child or related through an omniscient voice that views things with a child's values and motivations. Quality literature contains a point of view which is clearly distinguishable, consistent, and

believable. The language is youthful, and the style may include elements of humor, mystery, intrigue, and surprise.

Literary Style

The literary style answers the question, "How is the story written?" The choice of words, sentence structure, figures of speech, and rhythmic patterns are elements of style used to develop the plot, character, and settings. The complexity of the style should be appropriate for the age-level for which the story is written, including the narrative language and dialogue.

These literary elements of children's literature are sufficient to represent positive portrayals of individuals with MRDD in books written for adolescents, but books for young children are incomplete without illustrations.

Quality of Illustrations in Children's Literature

Picture storybooks are books targeted for young readers or non-readers that tell a story through pictures either alone or combined with text. Chapter books may contain some illustrations, but these pictures are not essential to the completeness of the story. Quality illustrations, including photography, incorporate story interpretation, appropriate style, text enhancement, quality art, artistry, layout and design.

Interpretation

Quality illustrations interpret the story well. The reader should be able to retell the story by "reading" the illustrations.

Style of Illustrations

The style of the illustrations should be appropriate to the story and age-level of the target audience. The style of the art (e.g., representational, expressionistic, surrealistic, impressionistic, folk, naive, cartoon) should be appealing to children.

Text Enhancement

Quality illustrations enhance the plot, theme, setting and mood of the story. They should be appropriate for the type of book and target age level. The illustrations should provide fuller descriptions than are

easily captured in text. Whereas informational picture books are likely to have representational artwork or photography, fantasies are more likely to be accompanied by less realistic art.

Quality of Art

The characteristics of quality art in illustrations include rhythm, balance, variety, emphasis, spatial order and unity. The artistic use of color, line, shape, and text displays the work as art for the sake of art, not merely to enhance the story. The artistic medium may be crayon, oil, watercolor, acrylics, chalk, water crayon pen/ink, woodcuts, colored pencils, charcoal, collage, or photography. One medium may be used throughout the book, or a combination may be employed.

Layout

The layout of the illustrations and text should be visually appealing, both on the cover and on each page of the book. The print size, color and placement complement the illustrations, and text is placed where it is easy to read.

Criteria for Selection

When selecting children's literature featuring characters with MRDD, one main question should be asked: "What is my purpose for using this book?" Chapter Three will provide examples of strategies for using children's literature for various purposes. Once the professional has determined his or her objectives and narrowed the list of potential books, consideration should be given to the (a) portrayal of the individual with MRDD, (b) quality of the literature and (c) quality of the illustrations. Obviously, a book may not be found that exactly meets these three general standards, but focus may be achieved in the selection process. For example, some books may be of high literary quality, yet portray individuals with MRDD as having limited opportunities for choice, independence, and socialization. On the other hand, some books may demonstrate high regard for the six values mentioned earlier, but have poor literary quality. Other books may be of high literary quality with positive portrayals of individuals with MRDD, but in some other way fail to meet the professional's educational purposes. Appendix A contains an annotated bibliography of fictional children's books written in the 1990s that include a character with MRDD. Ratings are provided for each book, but readers must remember, the best book for one's purposes is one that connects

the characters with the reader in a meaningful way. Therefore, creating a "high quality book list" is a highly personalized task.

Chapter

3

USING CHILDREN'S BOOKS INCLUDING CHARACTERS WITH MRDD

Purposes of Using Children's Books Including Characters with MRDD

Many children love reading or having someone read to them. Books are enchanting to children because they are windows by which readers can look outside of their own lived experiences and free their imaginations. Books are also mirrors, allowing readers to look within themselves to perceive feelings, relationships, and experiences at a deeper level. When readers vicariously interact with characters beyond the window, they discover new mirrors for personal reflection. Bonds form between the reader and the characters, although they may be separated by space, time, culture, language, or ability. When readers reflect on similarities between themselves and the characters in the book, they learn to accept characters who may, on the surface, appear to be different.

Children's literature that includes characters with mental retardation/ developmental disabilities may be used to promote introspection regarding awareness, understanding, and acceptance of self and others. Supplementary activities include retelling the story and evaluating books.

Awareness

Children learn at young ages that there is great diversity within the human population. Typically this knowledge is gained through direct experiences with people who appear to be different from themselves: boys/girls, young/old, dark-skinned/light-skinned. But many children's experiences with diverse groups of people are limited. One role of children's literature, then, is to provide readers with a level of awareness of various disabilities. For example, elementary children can learn what it might mean to have autism, where secondary

students might learn about the chromosomal make-up of children with Trisomy 18.

Beyond learning about the nature and characteristics of certain disabilities, readers should become aware of the individual nature of each child with MRDD. This awareness can be expanded by a focus on the strengths and capabilities of the character with MRDD, along with the desire of many to be accepted by their non-disabled peers.

Awareness of social issues also may be generated through children's books. At a basic level, students become aware of same/different, inclusion, friendship, and family relationships. More complex issues may include awareness of the eugenics movement, causation and prevention of mental retardation, and legislation affecting the lives of individuals with MRDD.

Appendix B includes two activities for awareness that can be used with any book with a character with MRDD. These activities are designed to make readers aware of similarities and differences between people with and without MRDD, as well as differences between authors' characterizations of people with a similar disability. These activities can be adapted to supplement the reading of any book with a child with a disability, not just those with MRDD.

Understanding

Knowledge of any kind should lead to greater understanding, which is the next level of introspection. After reading a quality book, readers should gain a better understanding of themselves, of others, and of social issues. Whereas "awareness" suggests a superficial level of knowledge "about" a person or issue, "understanding" suggests a deeper level of intellectual and personal involvement.

Reading books that portray an individual with MRDD may help readers understand their own feelings and reactions toward such individuals. Storylines that portray injustices toward characters with MRDD can provide rich discussions in which readers ask themselves, "What would I do in a similar situation?" or "What kind of a sibling would I be to a child with MRDD?"

When they are given opportunities to vicariously live the experiences of the character with MRDD, readers get a glimpse of what it might be

like to live with MRDD. Readers may understand the difficulties such individuals have with learning basic skills, communicating, making friends, or obtaining a driver's license.

Awareness should lead to a greater understanding of social issues. When students inquire about social issues involving individuals with MRDD, conduct related research, and report their findings, improved understanding of the issues may result. Issues to be explored may include (a) cultural differences in caring for individuals with MRDD, (b) governmental funding of programs for individuals with MRDD, (c) de-institutionalization, (d) employment practices, (e) pre-natal/ genetic counseling and selection, (f) historical treatment of individuals with MRDD, and (g) appropriate education.

Appendix B provides examples of two activities for understanding that allow readers to (a) put themselves in the position of the character with MRDD, and (b) understand why an author chose to include a character with MRDD in his/her book.

Acceptance

The next level of introspection, acceptance of self and others, requires a form of emotional involvement. It is quite possible that many people who are aware of human diversity and even understand the nature of specific disabilities or the heterogeneity within groups of people, never come to fully accept those who are different from them in one way or another. A powerful book may be the impetus that transforms readers' lives as they learn to accept their inadequacies, feelings, and reactions while interacting with a wide array of people. Readers can learn to accept their relationships with individuals with MRDD – as sibling, peer, child, co-worker, or future parent.

Presented in Appendix B are two activities to promote acceptance that include (a) recording insights and experiences in a "reflection journal," and (b) assessing one's attitudes towards individuals with MRDD.

Retelling

Readers can demonstrate that they understand the plot of the story by retelling the story in numerous ways. Students can retell the story with music, art, or pantomime; translate it into a different language;

or explore it with various written activities. Appendix B provides two activities for retelling that include (a) creating a "roller-movie," and (b) telling the story from a different historical time period.

Evaluation

The process of evaluating a book can be as simple as asking readers, "Did you like the story? Why/Why not?" Such informal evaluations can be essential in selecting books to match readers' interests. More formal evaluations can include detailed processes for creating a mock children's literature award or comparing and contrasting several published reviews of one book. Sample activities can be found in Appendix B.

Strategies for Using Children's Literature in the Classroom

Five purposes for using children's literature were discussed in the previous section. When a professional has determined his/her purposes for using a particular book, then strategies should be planned to meet this end. A systematic approach for using books that include characters with MRDD should be followed, even when a child with MRDD is not a member of the class. "One-shot" approaches may be sufficient to promote awareness, but they may fail to develop understanding and acceptance of the student with MRDD by his/her non-disabled peers. These approaches have been called "additive activities," because they are "added on" to the general curriculum and are not a regular part of the school experience (Hamre-Nietupski et al., 1989). Typical additive activities that incorporate children's literature include disability awareness activities, sensitization/ information sessions, and curricular units regarding a particular disability.

An integrated approach is proposed for teaching students about understanding and accepting students with disabilities. This type of approach may take a considerable amount of planning and coordination among professionals, but the message is clear: Diversity is not an "add on," but a regular, ongoing component of the general education curriculum. One example of an integrated approach is *concept infusion* (Hamre-Nietupski et al., 1989).

With concept infusion, the general curriculum is expanded to include references to disabilities at appropriate points, with an emphasis on

process activities rather than on presentations of information. The steps for planning and implementing this approach are as follows:

1. Establishing the core team of teachers.
2. Determining which diversity/disability concept to expand or highlight.
3. Selecting general education lessons/units for infusion.
4. Providing direct instruction of the diversity/disability concept (awareness, understanding, acceptance, evaluation, problem-solving).
5. Infusing the diversity/disability concept into current lessons/units.
6. Indirectly teaching the diversity/disability concept.
7. Evaluating the lesson and infusion activities (Hamre-Nietupski et al., 1989).

Another approach for teaching a diversity/disability concept is *guided discussion*. This approach attempts to link literature to the students' lives. Guided discussion is more direct than concept infusion, and can be used as an additive or embedded activity. The following steps are involved in guided discussion:

1. Discussing the story content (facts): who, what, when, where, why.
2. Discussing children with disabilities.
3. Relating the story to peers' past experiences.
4. Highlighting similarities between the character with disabilities and the readers.
5. Discussing any equipment related to the story content.
6. Discussing communication devices, wheelchairs, and other assistive technology.
7. Discussing future experiences the readers can have with students with disabilities (Favazza & Odom, 1997).

Regardless of the strategy used to teach a concept using children's books that include a character with MRDD, the purpose should remain clear. The students should have many opportunities to

express their reactions to the book, either orally or in writing, individually or collectively. When readers co-construct meaning for their lives after reading a quality book that portrays a character with MRDD, there will be a difference in how they treat and interact with those who for so long have been misrepresented, ignored, and maltreated.

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APPENDIX

A

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

This annotated bibliography includes information, summaries, and analyses of fictional books that include a character with mental retardation/developmental disabilities. Quality of portrayal, literature and illustrations were judged based upon the following scale, with priority given to the positive portrayal of characters with mental retardation/developmental disabilities (MRDD).

Recommendations/Ratings:

* = poor
** = fair
*** = good
**** = excellent

Fictional Picture Books

Andy and his Yellow Frisbee

Author: Mary Thompson

Illustrator: Mary Thompson

Publisher: Woodbine House

Year: 1996

Grade Range: Primary

Main Character: Sarah

Character with MRDD: Andy, who has autism

Plot: Sarah is at a new school and is curious about Andy, who sits by himself at recess and spins his frisbee. One day Sarah brings her own frisbee and tries to play with Andy. Rosie, Andy's older sister, comes over to make sure that Andy will not get upset. Andy ignores Sarah and her pink frisbee and continues to spin his yellow frisbee. Then Sarah invites Rosie to play catch with her frisbee while Andy continues to play by himself.

Content regarding MRDD: Characteristics of autism; Siblings; Responsibility; Inclusion

Content regarding other curricular areas: Friendship; New school; Recess games; Comfort items

Analysis: Andy is a young boy with autism who is portrayed as a child highly skilled at spinning items, but through his sister's perspective, other autistic characteristics are described (e.g., keeping to himself, difficulty talking, screaming when upset). He attends his neighborhood school, where his older sister is able to keep a watchful eye on him. Although concerned, Rosie does not appear to be over-protective of her brother. Sarah, who was unable to make a new friend in Andy, was able to make friends with his sister. This portrayal of the lack of immediate acceptance is realistic, and the emotions and frustrations of the characters are displayed nicely through the watercolor illustrations and simple symbolism in the text.

Recommendations/Ratings: ****

Are There Stripes in Heaven?

Author: Lee Klein

Illustrator: Pam Mauseth

Publisher: Paulist Press

Year: 1994

Grade Range: Primary

Main Character: Patrick

Character with MRDD: Colleen, Patrick's sister who has Down syndrome

Plot: Patrick is disappointed that he must attend mass rather than being able to go to his friend's house to play; he thinks church is boring because it is the same every week. But when he attends mass with his family, he discovers what makes going to church unique. Two girls had been teasing and avoiding Colleen, which upset Patrick. After the priest's homily on forgiveness, Colleen rushed out of her seat to make "peace" with everyone in the congregation, including the two girls who had been teasing her. Her parents were concerned about Colleen disturbing the service by shaking hands with everyone, but members of the congregation enjoyed her enthusiasm. Patrick realized that going to church was different today; Colleen had made at least two new friends. After returning home, Colleen observed the reflection of a rainbow in a puddle of water and asked her brother, "are there stripes in heaven?" Patrick had never seen a rainbow before and was grateful that she pointed it out to him before it disappeared.

Content regarding MRDD: Down syndrome; Behavior and learning characteristics; Siblings

Content regarding other curricular areas: Christian life; Forgiveness; Positive attitude; Teasing; Appreciation

Analysis: Colleen is described as being "special" primarily because she notices things that others do not bother to see. She has Down syndrome, but this is not evident from looking solely at the illustrations. She has a happy, outgoing personality and teaches others through her example to notice the beautiful and simple things in life.

Recommendations/Ratings: **

Be Good to Eddie Lee

Author: Virginia Fleming

Illustrator: Virginia Fleming

Publisher: Philomel

Year: 1993

Grade Range: Primary

Main Character: Christy

Character with MRDD: Eddie Lee, who has Down syndrome

Plot: Eddie Lee follows Christy and JimBud toward the lake, but JimBud tells him to go home. Once at the lake, Christy and JimBud look for frog eggs, but they do not find any. When they hear what they think is a monster approaching from the bushes, they discover that it is just Eddie Lee. He ends up taking Christy to a pond that she has never seen before where they find many fish eggs. Christy is impressed and calls him a genius. She wants to take some home, but Eddie Lee convinces her it wouldn't be good for the frogs.

Content regarding MRDD: Down syndrome; Characteristics; Speech; Name-calling; Abilities

Content regarding other curricular areas: Lakes; Ponds; Fish; Eggs; Tadpoles; Frogs; Feelings

Analysis: This is a visually beautiful book that shows well the physical characteristics of a boy with Down syndrome. It is also a realistic portrayal in that Eddie Lee is teased, but also given an opportunity to demonstrate his abilities. JimBud calls Eddie Lee names and wants nothing to do with him. On the other hand, Christy has been told by her mother to be good to Eddie Lee and she discovers that Eddie Lee knows things that she doesn't know.

Recommendations/Ratings: ****

Becca and Sue Make Two

Author: Sandra Haines

Illustrator: Gina Phillips

Publisher: Writer's Press

Year: 1995

Grade Range: Primary

Main Character: Becca, a six-year old girl

Character with MRDD: Sue, a young girl with Down syndrome

Plot: When Becca's grandparents stay with her for two days while her mother is out of town, Becca learns that her grandparents do things differently than her mother does. This valuable lesson helps her in her interactions with Sue, who is in her first grade class. Sue does things differently, but Becca accepts these differences. When the first grade talent show is announced, Becca invites Sue to play the piano with her. After many hours of practice, the girls successfully play "Chopsticks" at the talent show and realize that "together we're better."

Content regarding MRDD: Down syndrome; Inclusion; Abilities; Characteristics of speech and learning; Accepting differences in all people

Content regarding other curricular areas: Talent shows; Friendships; Practice; Genetics

Analysis: Two themes are strongly presented in this story: "together we're better" and "different people do things in different ways." Sue is included in school and social activities although she does things differently. Detailed information regarding Down syndrome is abruptly inserted into the story, as Sue's mother informs Becca's mom regarding its causation and characteristics.

Recommendations/Ratings: ***

Big Brother Dustin

Author: Alden R. Carter

Illustrator: Dan Young with Carol Carter (photographers)

Publisher: Albert Whitman & Company

Year: 1997

Grade Range: Primary

Main Character: Dustin

Character with MRDD: Dustin, a young boy with Down syndrome

Plot: When Dustin learns that he will soon become a big brother, he helps his parents prepare for the arrival of the baby. Dustin is given

the special assignment of thinking of a perfect name for the baby. After months of deliberating, Dustin finally comes up with a name that is accepted by his parents, a name that honors both of his grandmothers. The baby girl is born and Dustin is introduced to the sister that he named.

Content regarding MRDD: Down syndrome

Content regarding other curricular areas: Pregnancy; Babies; Hospital Nursery; Nurses; Family names

Analysis: This book promotes the self-determination of young Dustin, who is shown to be mindful of his assignment to name his new baby sister. Dustin's thought processes are shown, as he thinks about many names, some of which are silly (e.g., Honeybun). No mention is made of Dustin having Down syndrome, nor is there mention of his inabilities or limitations. The only way the reader may realize that Dustin has a disability is through the photographs which clearly depict a child with Down syndrome. The book ends with "scrapbook" pages of Dustin caring for, and playing with his sister over a period of approximately one year.

Recommendations/Ratings: ***

The Boy Who Swam in the Stars

Author: Derrik Eichelberger

Publisher: Mad Dog Publishing

Year: 1998

Grade Range: Primary

Main Character: Unnamed boy

Character with MRDD: Unnamed boy

Plot: This fairy tale is about young boy who tries to fly by flapping his arms. He also loves to swim. One day while his father was throwing the boy in the air, the father said that he would throw the boy into the stars. This excited the boy, who wanted to swim in the stars. His parents made a special feathered jacket that would allow the boy to fly. He eventually flew off into his own world, a place where his

parents were not able to go. When he returned, he explained his adventure to his parents in complete sentences, something he was previously unable to do. From that point on, the boy would occasionally fly to his own world, but he would always return home to his parents.

Content regarding MRDD: Acceptance of differences; Personal interests; Autism

Content regarding other curricular areas: Body awareness; Child-rearing; Feelings; Solar system; Swimming

Analysis: The boy depicted in this story is never mentioned to have a disability. However, although he appears to be a pre-school-aged child, he does not speak more than a few words, and often his utterances revolve around swimming or swimming in the stars. His parents are initially disturbed by their boy's behavior, but with the help of friends and family, they allowed the boy to live his own life and they learned to accept him as he is.

Recommendations/Ratings: ****

Buddy's Shadow

Author: Shirley Becker

Illustrator: Todd Fargo

Publisher: Jason & Nordic

Year: 1991

Grade Range: Primary

Main Character: Buddy, who has Down syndrome

Character with MRDD: Buddy

Plot: Buddy has difficulty keeping up with other children on the playground. But he has a secret that he has kept for sometime. He has been saving his money to buy a puppy, which he does. He does not allow the other children to play with his puppy because he's "my best friend." The puppy cries at night, which awakens the family, and he ends up sleeping in Buddy's room.

Content regarding MRDD: Down syndrome; Characteristics

Content regarding other curricular areas: Secrets; Saving money; Puppies

Analysis: This story portrays a young boy with Down syndrome who shows some self-determination by solving his problem of feeling lonely. He saves money and purchases a puppy for a playmate. The story line and portrayal aren't particularly compelling and the illustrations of portraying Down syndrome are not consistent.

Recommendations/Ratings: **

Captain Tommy

Author: Abby Ward Messner

Illustrator: Kim Harris Belliveau

Publisher: Potential Unlimited Publishing

Year: 1996

Age Range: Primary

Main Character: Tommy

Character with MRDD: John, who has autism

Plot: Tommy and his good friend Kevin attend their first day at summer camp, where they run to play on a large boulder. Another child, John, is already climbing and sliding on the rock and the two friends attempt to join him, but John ignores them and continues playing by himself. Later, as they sit in a circle of campers, they notice John rocking back and forth beside his special teacher, Mrs. Walton. Although Tommy wants to play with Kevin, he is given the special mission of guiding one of the ships that "isn't working properly" back to the main ship. Mrs. Walton explains John's autism and encourages Tommy to find ways to reach him. Tommy works hard to find ways to involve John in making space helmets and imaginative play. When it was time to go home, Captain Tommy felt very proud.

Content regarding MRDD: Characteristics of autism; Special educators; Inclusion

Content regarding other curricular areas: Summer; Friendship; Solar system

Analysis: John is portrayed as a young boy with autism who displays some of the more noticeable characteristics such as flapping hands, rocking, and echolalia. He is included in a summer day camp and is assisted by a special teacher, who arranges peer interaction between Tommy and John. The teacher provides specific suggestions for helping John to be successful and allows Tommy to think of his own ideas. Tommy's acceptance of John is the central theme and is brought to life through simple dialogue and colored pencil sketches.

Recommendations/Ratings: ***

Charlsie's Chuckle

Author: Clara Widess Berkus

*Illustrator:*Margaret Dodd (photographer)

Publisher: Woodbine

Year: 1992

Grade Range: Primary

Main Character: Charlsie, a 7-year old boy with Down syndrome

Character with MRDD: Charlsie

Plot: When Charlsie receives a bike for his birthday, he takes it for a solo ride around town. His ride is interrupted when he hears people shouting from the Town Hall, where Town Council members are calling each other names such as "blockhead" and "stubborn mule" as they vehemently discuss the poor economic condition of their town. Interested in seeing a "blockhead," "mule" and other interesting characters, Charlsie enters the chambers and sees ordinary-looking people. Charlsie is amused that ordinary people would be arguing in such a way, and he begins to chuckle. This caught the council members by surprise, who then begin making constructive solutions

to their town's problems. Charlsie was later heralded in the local newspaper and town parade.

Content regarding MRDD: Down syndrome; Abilities and interests; Learning characteristics

Content regarding other curricular areas: Drought; Famine; Homelessness; City government; Conflict resolution; Name-calling

Analysis: Charlsie is portrayed as a happy young boy with Down syndrome, whose chuckle is contagious. Emphasis is placed on his interests and strengths, although some mention is made of his slow rate of learning and the sadness his mother feels because she desires "more for him." Charlsie is portrayed as a hero who brings happiness to the townspeople, which may be unrealistic.

Recommendations/Ratings:***

Dustin's Big School Day

Author: Alden R. Carter

Illustrator: Dan Young & Carol S. Carter (photographers)

Publisher: Whitman

Year: 1999

Grade Range: Primary

Main Character: Dustin, who has Down syndrome

Character with MRDD: Dustin

Plot: Dustin, his teachers, and his classmates cannot wait until Dave and Skippy come to school. Dave was a classmate of Dustin's father. The story follows Dustin throughout his school day. He attends a general education classroom, music class, speech therapy, occupational therapy, special education (resource), as well as has lunch, and visits the library. Finally Dave and Skippy show up. Dave is a ventriloquist who entertains the children in an assembly with his "dummy," Skippy.

Content regarding MRDD: Down syndrome; Speech therapy; Occupational therapy; Special education classroom (resource room)

Content regarding other curricular areas: Kites; Africa; Nests; Ventriloquism; Puppets

Analysis: Dustin is portrayed as a second-grader who attends a general classroom and receives support services in pull-out programs. Nothing is mentioned about his disability other than that he has Down syndrome. Additional information about Down syndrome is not provided for the adult reader. The illustrations are beautiful photographs.

Recommendations/Ratings: ***

Finding a Friend

Author: Zilpha Booth

Illustrator: Pam DeVito

Publisher: Windswept

Year: 1996

Grade Range: Primary

Main Character: Andy

Character with MRDD: Mike, who has Down syndrome

Plot: Andy is looking forward to having a new friend, Mike. But he soon realizes Mike is not like other boys. His mother explains that Mike has Down syndrome and what that means. Andy and Mike spend a lot of time together. They discover a cave, which they decide to keep a secret. One day Andy goes to the cave alone and falls, breaking his leg. Everyone looks for Andy. Mike finds him at the cave and convinced by Andy that their cave cannot be kept a secret any more, Mike seeks the help Andy needs.

Content regarding MRDD: Down syndrome; Characteristics

Content regarding other curricular areas: Orchards; Apples; Blueberries; Swimming; Caves; Secrets; Fog

Analysis: This book portrays a nice reciprocal relationship between the two boys. The friends seem to enjoy one another and even have a disagreement. After the disagreement, Andy's mom encourages him to continue his friendship with Mike saying it can sometimes be hard, but "boys like Mike need a friend more than other boys do." Although the text explains that Mike has Down syndrome, the illustrations don't consistently portray those characteristics.

Recommendations/Ratings: ***

How Smudge Came to Be

Author: Nan Gregory

Illustrator: Ron Lightburn

Publisher: Walker

Year: 1995

Grade Range: Primary

Main Character: Cindy

Character with MRDD: Cindy, who has Down syndrome

Plot: Cindy brings a stray puppy home to her group home. Knowing the puppy would not be welcome, Cindy hides him and sneaks him food. She even takes him to the Hospice with her where she works cleaning. When she arrives home she is confronted with hiding something and she reveals the puppy she named Smudge. Cindy is forced to take Smudge to the Humane Society. When she returns to pick him up, the people at the Hospice have already taken him as a surprise for Cindy.

Content regarding MRDD: Characteristics; Employment; Group homes; Mobility

Content regarding other curricular areas: Puppies; Humane Society; Hospice; Buses; Disappointment; Surprises

Analysis: Information regarding Cindy's disability is not provided within the text of the book. The illustrations portray her as having

Down syndrome. The portrayal is positive in that Cindy is living in a group home and employed. She also demonstrates independence and the ability to transport herself to a new location on the bus.

Recommendations/Ratings: ***

Ian's Walk: A Story About Autism

Author: Laurie Lears

Illustrator: Karen Ritz

Publisher: Albert Whitman & Company

Year: 1998

Grade Range: Primary

Main Character: Julie, older sister of Ian

Character with MRDD: Ian, young boy who has autism

Plot: Ian's older sisters take him on a walk to the park to feed the ducks. On the way there, Julie comments that Ian's brain doesn't work like other people's brains. She then describes how Ian sees, hears, smells, feels, and tastes things differently. At one point Ian wanders off and his sisters use what they know about Ian to find him. When Julie finds Ian, she realizes how much she cares for her brother. The story ends with Julie allowing Ian to walk home the way he likes, stopping to see, hear, smell, and feel things along the way. Julie notices that when they arrive home, Ian briefly looks at her and smiles.

Content regarding MRDD: Sensory characteristics of autism; Siblings; Responsibility; Personal interests

Content regarding other curricular areas: Five senses; Neighborhoods; Getting lost

Analysis: This book includes a "Note about Autism" that acknowledges typical reactions and feelings of siblings of children with autism, and gives parents suggestions for addressing some of these concerns. Ian's autistic characteristics are portrayed in the descriptive text and through the vivid watercolor illustrations. This is

a beautiful story of love and acceptance of a child who is highly engaged in his own world.

Recommendations/Ratings: ****

Joey and Sam

Author: Illana Katz & Edward Ritvo

Illustrator: Franz Borowitz

Publisher: Real Life Story Books

Year: 1993

Grade Range: Primary

Main Character: Joey, a six-year old boy

Character with MRDD: Sam, Joey's five-year old brother who has autism

Plot: Early one spring morning, Sam is awake and disturbing Joey, his older brother. Joey gets annoyed at Sam's peculiar habits and wonders why his brother is different from other brothers. School activities are described and when Sam reads a poem and dances in the "Spring Sing," Joey and his friends enthusiastically applaud his performance. Joey then realizes he can accept his brother just as he is.

Content regarding MRDD: Characteristics of autism; Siblings; Special education classrooms; Speech therapy; Acceptance

Content regarding other curricular areas: Spring; Family life; School assemblies

Analysis: The book begins with a lovely poem, "Mother to her Autistic Child" which illustrates a mother's desire to know how her autistic child thinks, feels, hears, sees, and otherwise experiences life. Sam's autistic characteristics (including splinter skills) are portrayed throughout the story. He rides the same bus as his brother, but is educated in a self-contained classroom with five other students who have autism. Three "teachers" work with these students, and they are included in the school assembly.

Recommendations/Ratings: ***

My Brother, Matthew

Author: Mary Thompson

Illustrator: Mary Thompson

Publisher: Woodbine House

Year: 1992

Grade Range: Primary

Main Character: Matthew

Character with MRDD: Matthew

Plot: Told from the perspective of older brother David, Matthew's life is chronicled starting at his birth. Matthew remains in the hospital after being born and a phone call from the hospital (because Matthew had taken a turn for the worse) interrupts David's birthday party. After Matthew comes home, David learns to play with him. He reads books to him and acts as his interpreter since others don't understand Matthew's speech as well as David.

Content regarding MRDD: Characteristics; Speech; Impact on families; Physical therapy

Content regarding other curricular areas: Cats; Babies; Birthdays; Hospitals; Space travel; Siblings

Analysis: This book realistically portrays the impact of a child with a disability on the family. The older brother is jealous of all the attention Matthew receives, yet also becomes his closest ally. Matthew's mother appears over-protective, telling David not to play too hard with Matthew, which David ignores. Matthew seems to be well-accepted by David's friends.

Recommendations/Ratings: ***

My Brother Sammy

Author: Becky Edwards

Illustrator: David Armitage

Publisher: Milbrook Press

Year: 1999

Grade Range: Primary

Main Character: Unnamed brother of Sammy

Character with MRDD: Sammy, a young boy with autism

Plot: Sammy's brother describes his feelings of sadness, embarrassment, loneliness, and frustration because Sammy learns and does things differently. When Sammy knocks down his brother's block tower, his brother yells, "I don't want a special brother!" Sammy repeats "special brother" to him and their mother points out that they are both special. Sammy's brother then learns to accept the way Sammy does things and begins to develop a special relationship with Sammy.

Content regarding MRDD: Autism; Special schools; Siblings; Acceptance of differences; Behavioral; speech and learning characteristics

Content regarding other curricular areas: Feelings; Friends; School bus

Analysis: Sammy, a young boy with autism, is the source of many of his brother's negative feelings until he learns to accept Sammy's differences. Sammy goes to a special school, does not play with others, enjoys visual and tactile sensations, has echolalic speech, and has little regard for others' property. The literary style beautifully reflects the feelings of Sammy's brother throughout the story, with a chiasmic presentation and resolution of Sammy's inner conflict. Rich watercolor illustrations emotionally engage the reader in the lives of Sammy and his brother.

Recommendations/Ratings: ****

Somebody Called Me a Retard Today...and My Heart Felt Sad

Author: Ellen O'Shaughnessy

Illustrator: David Garner

Publisher: Walker

Year: 1992

Grade Range: Primary

Main Character: Unnamed girl

Character with MRDD: Unnamed girl

Plot: A young girl is called "retard" which makes her cry. Her father tries to console his daughter telling her all the great things people don't know about her, including that she has feeling just like other kids. He suggests she not pay attention when others call her names and to walk away. But she tells the reader she still felt sad when someone called her a "retard."

Content regarding MRDD: Characteristics; Name-calling; Labels

Content regarding other curricular areas: Feelings; Doing one's best; Consoling others

Analysis: This is a simple book about a young girl's feelings being hurt. The emphasis on her strengths that her father identifies becomes overshadowed with her statement at the end that she still feels sad. But this ending also provides a realistic portrayal.

Recommendations/Ratings: **

Talking to Angels

Author: Esther Watson

Illustrator: Esther Watson

Publisher: Harcourt Brace & Co.

Year: 1996

Grade Range: Primary

Character with MRDD: Christa, who has autism

Plot: The author describes Christa, who has a special relationship with the author. They do many things together and Christa likes to do some things by herself. Christa's likes and dislikes are portrayed and ultimately the author reveals that Christa is her autistic sister and her best friend.

Content regarding MRDD: Characteristics of autism; Siblings; Skills and interests

Content regarding other curricular areas: Communication; Five senses; Empathy

Analysis: Christa is portrayed as a young girl who likes to do many things that do not appear to be "abnormal" (e.g., imitate others' speech, play with water, and feel her kitten's fur). Not until the end of the book is Christa described as having autism, which presents a positive portrayal of this young girl. The text is simplistic and is accompanied with naïve art, with mixed media.

Recommendations/Ratings: ****

Thumbs Up, Rico!

Author: Maria Testa

Illustrator: Diane Paterson

Publisher: Whitman

Year: 1994

Grade Range: Primary

Main Character: Rico, who has Down syndrome

Character with MRDD: Rico

Plot: This book contains three brief stories about Rico who has Down syndrome. In the first story, Rico tries to befriend Caesar. At first, Caesar calls him "dummy," but he warms up to Rico when he sees how good he is at playing basketball. In the second story, Rico's sister, Nina, must decide between going to a friend's birthday party or Rico's basketball game. Rico wants her to attend his game, but when he sees how hard it is for Nina to decide, he finally tells her to go to the

birthday party. In the last story, Rico knows he is not very good at art and does not seem to be able to draw something worthy of being displayed until he thinks of drawing something he knows best, himself playing basketball.

Content regarding MRDD: Down syndrome; Name-calling; Characteristics

Content regarding other curricular areas: Basketball; Making decisions; Siblings; Drawing; Dreams; Friendship

Analysis: Rico shows strong self-determination in making friends with Caesar and persisting in an area in which he feels weak, his drawing skills. He also shows sensitivity by unselfishly telling his sister to attend the birthday party rather than his basketball game. Rico is also portrayed as very emotional, crying when Nina cries. The good story line is hampered by the illustrations in that they are not consistently accurate in portraying Down syndrome.

Recommendations/Ratings: **

Trevor Trevor

Author: Diane Twachtman-Cullen

Illustrator: Diedre Sassano

Publisher: Starfish Press

Year: 1998

Grade Range: Primary

Main Character: Trevor, a boy with autism

Plot: The annual competition between two elementary schools is only a few weeks away and Mrs. Grayley, a second-grade teacher, is preparing her students, who are frustrated at their potential to win the competition. Mrs. Grayley struggles to find an activity that will ensure the success of the class, particularly Trevor, a young boy who is often removed from the other students. His classmates tease Trevor, who gets upset when he can't keep up with his peers. But when Mrs. Grayley suggests they have a puzzle contest, Trevor becomes the key player on the team and almost miraculously wins

the competition for their school. Mrs. Grayley is pleased and Trevor's classmates hail Trevor as the hero of their class.

Content regarding MRDD: Characteristics of autism; Inclusion; Special skills; Social skills

Content regarding other curricular areas: Teasing; Friendships; Acceptance of differences; School competitions

Analysis: Trevor is portrayed as a boy who is different from the rest of his classmates. He is not mentioned to have autism, so teachers and parents can use this story to address the needs of children who have difficulty "fitting in," regardless of diagnostic label. The main autistic characteristics Trevor displays are being in his own world, getting upset easily, not knowing how to play with peers, reciting obscure facts, and putting puzzles together skillfully. He is educated with nondisabled peers who learn to accept him only after he wins the competition for their team. Written metaphorically, this story has many embedded lessons regarding teasing, understanding, and accepting others. The artwork skillfully displays the special concern Mrs. Grayley has for Trevor, and the range of emotions among Trevor's peers are evident, while Trevor's expressions remain relatively consistent. Two cut-out figures of Trevor accompany the book, enabling readers to act out events of the story.

Recommendations/Ratings: ***

Veronica's First Year

Author: Jean Sasso Rheingrover

Illustrator: Kay Life

Publisher: Albert Whitman

Year: 1996

Grade Range: Primary

Main Character: Nathan

Character with MRDD: Veronica, who has Down syndrome

Plot: Nathan helps his parents prepare for the arrival of their new baby. After Veronica is born, Nathan visits her and his mom at the hospital. When Nathan asks if Veronica is sick, his father answers no, but he explains she has Down syndrome, meaning it will take her longer to learn. After Veronica comes home, Nathan and his father start a baby album for her just like Nathan's baby album; and they continue to add photos every month.

Content regarding MRDD: Down syndrome; Characteristics

Content regarding other curricular areas: Hospitals; Photo albums; Bicycles; Tricycles; Siblings; Developmental milestones

Analysis: This book consists of a pleasant story with beautiful illustrations. The book would be a good way to introduce a young child to the birth of a sibling with Down syndrome. It also could be used to describe differences in developmental milestones during the first year. Information, labeled "Note to Parents," appears at the end of the book and explains more about Down syndrome and the impact a new baby with Down syndrome can have on a family.

Recommendation/Rating: ***

We'll Paint the Octopus Red

Author: Stephanie Stuve-Bodeen

Illustrator: Pam DeVito

Publisher: Woodbine House

Year: 1998

Grade Range: Primary

Main Character: Emma, a six-year old girl

Character with MRDD: Isaac, Emma's new baby brother who has Down syndrome

Plot: Emma is unhappy when she learns that she must share her parents with her new baby brother, Isaac. Her father talks with Emma about what she can do with the baby, such as changing his diapers, playing ball, and reading to him. Emma then thinks of fun things to do

with her new brother, which makes her feel ready to be a big sister. But when Emma learns that Isaac has Down syndrome, she believes that he will not be able to do all of the things that she wanted to do with him. Her father tells Emma that if they are patient and willing to help Isaac, there would not be anything that he would not be able to do. Emma accepts this and gladly welcomes Isaac into the family.

Content regarding MRDD: Down syndrome, Abilities; High expectations; Siblings' reactions

Content regarding other curricular areas: Farm animals; Art festivals; Airplanes; African safari

Analysis: This is a touching book that shows the emotions of a young girl who learns to accept her brother who has Down syndrome, without stifling her expectations for his success. The textual parallelism shows the dichotomous nature of Emma's feelings, from apprehension to eventual acceptance. The watercolor illustrations do not specifically show the baby as having Down syndrome until after it is revealed to Emma, leading the readers to accept the unexpected revelation.

Recommendations/Ratings: ****

Fictional Chapter Books

Are You Alone On Purpose?

Author: Nancy Werlin

Publisher: Ballantine Books

Year: 1994

Pages: 184

Grade Range: Middle

Main Character: Alison Shandling

Character with MRDD: Adam Shandling, Alison's twin brother who has autism

Plot: Alison becomes involved with Harry Roth, the school bully, after he has a swimming accident that leaves him paralyzed. Alison faces the challenges of adolescence and religion, intensified by the pressures of having a twin brother with autism. Using his memory skills, Adam successfully completes his bar mitzvah, much to his parents delight. Alison's parents discover she has been lying to them about her relationship with Harry. Alison's emotions are brought to the surface as she unloads her burden of being the "normal" child. Alison's parents express their love and concern as they seek to understand her and provide the attention that she requires. However, Alison concludes that she felt they would never really understand her needs.

Content regarding MRDD: Autism; Siblings; Characteristics of autism; Splinter skills

Content regarding other curricular areas: Jewish life; Bar Mitzvah; Paraplegia; Friendships; Self-worth; Twins

Analysis: Adam is portrayed as a teenager with autism, whose life is governed by ritual. Although his autistic characteristics appear to prevent him from living a "normal" life, they do not hinder him from completing his Bar Mitzvah. His sister expresses deep feelings about only being accepted by her parents because she is not autistic and feels that she needs to be perfect in order to "make up" for what Adam lacks. Realistic feelings of adolescent siblings of children with autism are explored, and not all of these unsettling feelings are resolved.

Recommendations/Ratings: ***

The Baby-Sitters Club: Kristy and the Secret of Susan

Author: Ann Martin

Publisher: Scholastic, Inc.

Year: 1990

Pages: 145

Grade Range: Intermediate.

Main Character: Kristy, the babysitter

Child with MRDD: Susan Felder, who has autism

Plot: Kristy receives a special assignment to babysit Susan, who is home from a residential school. Kristy thinks that Susan should not go back to the residential school and begins trying to help her make friends. Kristy's strategy fails and when the month is over Susan returns to the residential school, where Kristy believes Susan will receive an education that will meet her complex needs.

Content regarding MRDD: Characteristics of autism; Savant skills; Residential school

Content regarding other curricular areas: Babysitting; Teasing; Friendships

Analysis: Although she does not appear to be interested in making friends, Susan has particular savant skills such as her ability to recall the particular day of any given date in the past 60 years. She can also play piano pieces by heart after hearing them just once and she sings in perfect pitch. Although she is non-verbal, engages in self-stimulatory behavior, and learns slowly, Susan does not have destructive or abusive behavior that might warrant placement in a residential school. However, her parents decide her needs would be best met in a special school, rather than in the class for "handicapped kids" at the elementary school. The teachers of this class had previously communicated to the Felders that Susan was too low functioning for the class and the parents felt it was not individualized enough for her. Kristy also concludes that Susan is too low-functioning for the public schools to educate her, and that even the "retarded kids" can learn, want to learn, and are not "all locked up inside themselves" and that maybe Susan does not belong with the "regular kids."

Recommendations/Ratings: *

Brother Moose

Author: Betty Levin

Publisher: Greenwillow

Year: 1990

Pages: 213

Grade Range: Middle

Main Character: Nell

Character with MRDD: Louisa, who is described as being "slow"

Plot: Set in the 20th century, Nell and Louisa, who have become almost like sisters, are being transported to new foster homes in Canada. Louisa arrives at her destination where she is abused. Nell encounters difficulties locating her foster home, so she seeks out Louisa, finds her, and they escape together. Nell and Louisa meet the Native American who was to deliver Nell in the first place. The three of them, along with his grandson, journey to find Nell's foster mother, who by now has returned to the home of her parents in Maine. The four of them get caught in the woods during the winter season and struggle to keep alive, let alone keep moving toward their destination.

Content regarding MRDD: Learning and communication characteristics

Content regarding other curricular areas: Native Americans; Winter; Trains; Legends; Moose; Horses; Woods; Survival techniques; Orphans; Foster homes

Analysis: Louisa is described throughout the story as slow. Nell feels protective of her and is concerned about the impression Louisa leaves on other people. It isn't until the end that Nell recognizes she should have been more concerned about the impression she, herself, leaves on others. Louisa is portrayed as slow to learn new skills and as having difficulty expressing herself verbally. She does, however, demonstrate skills that Nell does not have and in the end is the one chosen to stay with Nell's foster mother. The author's note at the end of the book explains the historical basis for the story. Generally the story is well-told but toward the middle of the book it becomes less engaging and the story seems to drag.

Recommendation/Rating: **

A Couple of Kooks and Other Stories about Love

Author: Cynthia Rylant

Publisher: Franklin Watts

Year: 1990

Pages: 104

Grade Range: Advanced

Main Character: Ernie

Character with MRDD: Ernie, who has mental retardation

Plot: This book of eight short love stories contains one with a character with mental retardation, Ernie. While living with his mother, a flower seed package is mistakenly delivered to their home. Ernie keeps the seeds even after his mother dies and he moves to a group home. After watching a garden grow in the yard at the group home, Ernie gets help planting and growing flowers from the seed packages. He then delivers weekly, but secretively, a bouquet of flowers to the woman at the hardware store who delivered the seeds in the first place.

Content regarding MRDD: Mental retardation; Group homes

Content regarding other curricular areas: Seeds; Flowers; Vegetables; Growth cycle; Love vs. "crushes"; Stereotyping gender roles

Analysis: This story may be viewed as sweet, but little else. The reader learns very little about Ernie other than he has mental retardation, he lived with his mother but now lives in a group home, and he has a "crush" on the delivery woman who delivered the seeds some time ago.

Recommendations/Ratings: **

Crazy Lady!

Author: Jane Leslie Conly

Publisher: Harper Collins

Year: 1993

Pages: 180

Grade Range: Intermediate

Main Character: Vernon

Character with MRDD: Ronald, who has mental retardation

Plot: Vernon and his friends make fun of Maxine, the crazy lady, and her son, Ronald, until Vernon begins receiving tutoring. For payment, his tutor asks Vernon to help Maxine with yard work. Vernon and Ronald gradually become friends and Vernon ends up organizing a carnival to raise money to buy Vernon track shoes for Special Olympics. Maxine's drinking ends up interfering with her parenting abilities and Ronald ends up moving in with relatives.

Content regarding MRDD: Physical characteristics; Segregated schooling; Institutions; Busing; Teasing; Special Olympics; Special education teachers

Content regarding other curricular areas: Tutoring; Low academic skills; Stealing; Alcoholism; Friendship; Carnivals; Gardening

Analysis: Although this book portrays a nice reciprocal relationship between Vernon and Ronald, it also does not represent best practice in special education. Ronald attends a segregated school and one of Vernon's friends confides in him that he has a brother like Ronald who is institutionalized. The transformation of victimizing Ronald to helping him and being is friend is admirable. Vernon has academic difficulty, and although not labeled as such, may have a learning disability. The book is a Newbery Honor Book.

Recommendations/Ratings: **

Emily in Love

Author: Susan Goldman Rubin

Publisher: Browndeer Press/Harcourt

Year: 1997

Pages: 160

Grade Range: Middle

Main Character: Emily

Character with MRDD: Emily, who has mental retardation

Plot: As fourteen-year-old Emily begins attending high school, she wants to hide the fact that she is "special." When she gets lost the first day, she meets Hunt. From then on, Emily is smitten with Hunt, although Donnie, another "special" student, likes Emily. She and her friend, Molly, plan a party so they can invite Hunt. The party turns into a disaster. Hunt, however, is writing an article on student employment for the school newspaper and asks Emily for an interview. After Emily agrees, she is given an opportunity to work extra hours for pay on the same day. She struggles with trying to keep both commitments and misses the interview with Hunt.

Content regarding MRDD: Name-calling; Employment; Social skills; Integration

Content regarding other curricular areas: Belonging; Friends; Dating; Journalism; Word processing

Analysis: This book portrays a good example of an adolescent with mental retardation who attempts to be "normal." Emily knows that she is "special," but tries to hide it from potential new friends at the new school. She is integrated in computer and physical education classes, although she has difficulty in both. Emily and her friend, Molly, try to blend in with others in the school, by dressing and socializing in the same manner. Although Donnie likes Emily, she dismisses him because he is not "normal." In the end, Emily admits that she's been treating Donnie the way others have treated her. In addition to school and social situations, this book also portrays Emily learning employment skills and succeeding.

Recommendation/Rating: ***

The Falcon's Wing

Author: Dawna Lisa Buchanan

Publisher: Orchard

Year: 1992

Pages: 116

Grade Range: Intermediate

Main Character: Bryn

Character with MRDD: Winnie, who has Down syndrome

Plot: After 12-year-old Bryn's mother dies, she and her father move from Ohio to Ontario, Canada and move in with Bryn's aunt, Pearl, and her cousin, Winnie. Making the change is difficult for Bryn. She misses her mother and needs to adjust to a very different home and school life. Eventually, Bryn and Winnie become good friends and Bryn defends her at all costs.

Content regarding MRDD: Down syndrome; Characteristics; Name-calling; Group home; Institutions; Victimization

Content regarding other curricular areas: Canada; Ohio; Farms; Dreams; Holding grudges; Mice; Fishing

Analysis: Winnie is described as having Down syndrome. She attends the local two-room school, but is victimized endlessly by the other children. When a young child falls in the river, Winnie runs for help while Bryn jumps in to save her. Although Rita accuses Winnie of pushing the girl into the river, others around commend her for being the calmest one among them and seeking help. Near the end of the story Winnie complains that Rita called her a retard. Bryn tells her she isn't really retarded, but Pearl flatly corrects Bryn by saying she is retarded, and there is nothing she can do about it except love her and help her to be the best she can be.

Recommendations/Ratings: ***

Heartless Hero

Author: Judy Baer

Publisher: Bethany House

Year: 1997

Pages: 140

Grade Range: Middle

Main Character: Lexi

Character with MRDD: Ben, who has Down syndrome

Plot: Lexi is surrounded by bullies. First, she sees her brother, Ben, and his bookworm friend, Thomas, who become victims of bullies. Then two newcomers to her school, one male and one female, bully Lexi's friends. Her father meets up with a former schoolmate who continues the bullying he started years ago. In each case the bullies are confronted and the bullying stops. In the end, thanks to the persistence of Lexi's mother, the school implements new policies and education programs to help eliminate bullying.

Content regarding MRDD: Down syndrome; Victimization; Attitudes towards those with MRDD

Content regarding other curricular areas: Bullying; Self-confidence; Behavior management; Dyslexia; Bible; Scriptures

Analysis: This book was written with the theme of bullying in mind. It permeates the complete story line. Although Ben, the character with Down syndrome is a minor character, the victimization he experiences is portrayed realistically. Little else, however, is learned about Ben. The fact that he and Thomas, who does not have disabilities, become friends, is a nice representation of reciprocity between characters. The scriptural references throughout make the book a morality story.

Recommendation/Rating: **

The Man Who Loved Clowns

Author: June Rae Wood

Publisher: Putnam's Sons

Year: 1992

Pages: 224

Grade Range: Intermediate

Main Character: Delrita

Character with MRDD: Punky, an adult with Down syndrome

Plot: Eighth-grader Delrita avoids making friends, afraid they'll make fun of her Uncle Punky. She is content to stay home with her family doing her woodcarving and caring for Punky. Delrita's world, however, turns upside down when her parents are killed in a car accident and she and Punky are forced to move in with Uncle Bert and Aunt Queenie.

Content regarding MRDD: Down syndrome; Physical and language characteristics; Heart problems; Sheltered workshops; Special Olympics

Content regarding other curricular areas: Friendship; Death; Antiques; Woodcarving; Clowns; Patriotism; Nitroglycerin

Analysis: Punky is portrayed as an adult with Down syndrome who never attended school or developed any independence. He has lived with his parents, then his sister and her family. Aunt Queenie accuses her sister-in-law of spoiling Punky by giving in to his wishes and not involving him in a sheltered workshop or Special Olympics. By the end of the book, Punky is exposed to these activities and his niece, Delrita, is surprised by his enjoyment of them. This book provides a realistic example of an adult with Down syndrome. It is, however, outdated in terms of best practice. The emphasis regarding employment is on sheltered workshops, although McJobs (through McDonalds) and job coaching are mentioned.

Recommendations/Ratings: **

Me and Rupert Goody

Author: Barbara O'Connor

Publisher: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux

Year: 1999

Pages: 106

Grade Range: Intermediate

Main Character: Jennalee

Character with MRDD: Rupert, who is considered to be "slow"

Plot: Although he is not her uncle, Jennalee calls him Uncle Beau and volunteers at his General Store. In fact, they seem to be best friends until a strange young man who claims to be Uncle Beau's son, interrupts their lives. It isn't until Uncle Beau is struck by lightening and Rupert thinks it was his fault that the relationship begins to become a three-some.

Content regarding MRDD: Characteristics; Teasing; Name-calling

Content regarding other curricular areas: Language dialects; Cherokee Indians; Gratitude; Thunder and lightening; Mining; Rubies; Jealousy; Foster homes; Fires

Analysis: Rupert, the illegitimate son of Uncle Beau, is African-American, tall, thin, and considered slow. Jennalee very quickly recognizes Rupert is different and asks Uncle Beau what is wrong with him. Uncle Beau responds, "Just a mite slow, I reckon." (p. 24). Jennalee reacts, "Seems a tad more than slow to me." (p. 25). Rupert's slowness is characterized by his mimicking others, gullibility, awkwardness in trying to ride a bicycle, paralyzing fear of thunder and lightening, and limited language skills. Although the reader learns that Rupert has been passed from foster home to foster home following his mother's death, nothing is mentioned about schooling. He seems to have a learned a trade repairing small appliances, although the ending questions the quality of his workmanship.

Recommendations/Ratings: ***

My Sister Annie

Author: Bill Dodds

Publisher: Boyds Mill

Year: 1993

Pages: 94 pages

Grade Range: Intermediate

Main Character: Charlie

Character with MRDD: Annie, Charlie's older sister who has Down syndrome

Plot: Even though Annie is his older sister, 11-year-old Charlie seems older. His life revolves around baseball, a school club he wants to join, and Misty, a girl he wants to ask to the school dance. Just when life seems to be going well, Annie gets in his way, mostly embarrassing him in front of his friends. He tries to avoid her in public, even when the family is on an outing together. Charlie comes to realize in the end, however, his appreciation for his sister.

Content regarding MRDD: Down syndrome; Characteristics; Impact on family; Special schools; Group homes; Special Olympics, Institutions

Content regarding other curricular areas: Baseball; Bowling; Dares; Stealing; Vandalism; Embarrassment

Analysis: Written from the perspective of a sibling, this book captures the embarrassment of having a sister with mental retardation. Charlie is more interested in his peers than his own sister. In the end his priorities change. The motivation for this sudden change is not clear. Annie is portrayed as a teenager with Down syndrome who attends a segregated school and participates in Special Olympics. Many topics about mental retardation are mentioned throughout the story (e.g., institutions, group homes).

Recommendations/Ratings: **

Radiance Descending

Publisher: Random House

Author: Paula Fox

Year: 1997

Pages: 101

Grade Range: Middle

Main Character: Paul

Character with MRDD: Jacob, who has Down syndrome

Plot: Paul has never accepted his younger brother, Jacob, who has Down syndrome. He is embarrassed by him and doesn't want others to see them together. Jacob seems to get all of the family attention and Paul doesn't recognize that Jacob idolizes him. At one point their mother asks Paul to walk Jacob to his doctor's appointment. Paul walks Jacob so briskly they arrive 35 minutes early. The next time Paul takes Jacob, he lets him walk at his own pace and do what he wants along the way. Jacob enters stores interacting with people inside who know his name and pay much attention to him. Paul thinks they are only pacifying Jacob by pretending that he is "normal." All of these people come to Jacob's birthday party, which amazes Paul.

Content regarding MRDD: Down syndrome; Characteristics; Impact on family

Content regarding other curricular areas: Doctors; Grandpas; Running away; Anger

Analysis: Although well written, this book presents a negative perspective of having a sibling with Down syndrome. The story portrays Paul's resentment and anger at his brother, simply because he was born with Down syndrome. The anger continues through many years and although Paul begins to see Jacob differently, the transformation is never complete.

Recommendation/Rating: **

Risk 'N Roses

Author: Jan Slepian

Publisher: Philomel

Year: 1990

Pages: 175 pages

Grade Range: Intermediate

Main Character: Skip

Character with MRDD: Angela, who has mental retardation

Plot: Skip and her family move to the Bronx soon after World War II so that Angela has a school to attend. Skip makes friends with Jean, the neighborhood hoodlum, and runs off with Jean and her friends leaving Angela alone on the front steps. Angela is drawn across the street by Kaminsky's roses. He invites her inside and they become friends. Later, Jean and her friends dare Angela to clip off all of Kaminsky's roses, which she does. This devastates Kaminsky because he has named each of his flowers for the relatives he lost in the holocaust.

Content regarding MRDD: Victimization; Impact on families; Segregated schools; Historical context; Employment

Content regarding other curricular areas: Roses; World War II; Holocaust; Dares; Clubs; Abuse

Analysis: This book portrays an historical perspective on mental retardation. Angela's family moves to another part of New York City so that she has a school to attend. Her parents express concern not only for her current situation, but also for her future regarding employment opportunities. Angela's mother comes across somewhat overprotective, although for a family moving to a near neighborhood, this portrayal is realistic. The victimization of Angela is dramatic, yet also realistic.

Recommendations/Ratings: ***

Tru Confessions

Author: Janet Tashjian

Publisher: Holt: New York

Year: 1997

Pages: 165 pages

Grade Range: Middle

Main Character: Tru

Character with MRDD: Eddie, Tru's twin brother who has a developmental disability

Plot: Tru (short for Trudy) fantasizes about two things: finding a cure for Eddie's developmental disability and producing her own television program. After learning about a local cable company's contest, Tru chronicles her brother's life on video and submits it to the contest. Tru wins the contest, bringing her one step closer to one of her goals. Through this process she realizes, however, that her second goal will probably never be achieved.

Content regarding MRDD: Causes; Asphyxia; Characteristics; Labels; Inclusion; Teasing; Name-calling; Cures

Content regarding other curricular areas: Twins; Journaling; Computers; Video; E-mail; Internet; Television; Soccer

Analysis: This book is cleverly written in the form of a personal journal. Tru is a true advocate for her twin brother, Eddie. She expresses a sense of guilt about Eddie being the one who had difficulty during birth, which resulted in his disability. In fact, when she learns that baby sharks devour one another while still in the womb she wonders if she had tried to do that to Eddie. Eddie appears fully included in the general education classroom. The impact of Eddie being her brother is realistically portrayed. For example, other children tease both of them and Tru defends her brother. As another example, in the end Tru sees herself growing beyond Eddie and is a bit fearful of that happening.

Recommendations/Ratings: ****

Under the Shadow of Wings

Author: Sara Harrell Banks

Publisher: Simon & Schuster

Year: 1997

Pages: 147 pages

Grade Range: Intermediate

Main Character: Tattnall, an 11-year old girl

Character with MRDD: Obie, Tattnall's 15-year old cousin who is described as having brain damage

Plot: Set in a rural Southern community during World War II, this story depicts the feelings of independence and obligation Tattnall feels toward her cousin, Obie. Tattnall, Obie, and their friend Bubba enjoy spending their leisurely summer days together, and Tattnall feels responsible for keeping Obie out of trouble. When Tattnall learns that a traveling preacher might be able to "heal" Obie, she takes him to the revival, and the preacher's attempts to heal him are unsuccessful. When Obie begins to express his frustrations and independence, his mother decides that he is no longer manageable and sends him away to a residential school. When Obie returns for the Christmas holiday, his family discovers that he has developed some self-help skills, although he still needs supervision and support. Obie, frustrated at his relationship with Tattnall, runs away in the cold and catches pneumonia, which takes his life.

Content regarding MRDD: Etiology of mental retardation; Characteristics of mental retardation; Social skills; Independence; Family reactions and obligations; Residential schools

Content regarding other curricular areas: World War II; World War II Aircraft Alabama; Rural settings; Spiritual Revivals; Illness and death

Analysis: The theme of "wings of protection" was strongly interwoven throughout the story, which arguably resulted in Obie's lack of progress throughout his life. It was not until he entered the residential school that he learned to take care of himself. All of his life Obie had

been cared for by his mother, cousin, and community members, with little regard for the need for him to develop strengths of his own. This compelling story does not portray modern "best practices," but may illustrate the historical treatment of individuals needing limited or extensive educational and life-skills support.

Recommendations/Ratings: ***

When Pigs Fly

Author: June Rae Wood

Publisher: Putnam's Sons

Year: 1995

Pages: 259

Grade Range: Middle

Main Character: Buddy

Character with MRDD: Reenie, Buddy's younger sister who has Down syndrome

Plot: Nothing seems to be going right in Buddy's life. Her parents are stressed since her father lost his job, her brother teases her endlessly and her best friend seems to have it all. One positive in Buddy's life is her younger sister, Reenie. Buddy watches out for Reenie. The family's financial situation forces them to sell their home and move to a dilapidated farmhouse. Giving up the comforts and familiarity of home is about all she can take. As Buddy learns more about other people's problems, however, she gains a much greater appreciation for her family and her life.

Content regarding MRDD: Down syndrome; Characteristics; Language skills; Impact on family

Content regarding other curricular areas: Friendship; Teasing; Suburbia vs. country life; Snakes; Antiques; Swap meets; Parenting skills; Being self-sufficient; Alcoholism; Divorce/remarriage

Analysis: Reenie is portrayed as a typical pre-teen girl with Down syndrome. Her vocabulary is limited and she speaks with a speech

impediment. Reenie's schooling is not a major part of the story, although her sister accompanies her to what appears to be a general elementary school each day. She is either teased or protected by other children. Reenie is obsessed with purses and fire. She collects small rocks that she calls, "dollars," which her family and friends allow her to exchange for goods and services. Her obsession with fire requires the family to keep her away from matches and to remove the stove handles after cooking. She is also notorious for running away quickly, which causes her brother to nickname her, "Flash." Although her older sister, Buddy, takes much responsibility for Reenie, Reenie is the one who takes care of Buddy in the end demonstrating a nice reciprocal relationship between the two.

Recommendations/Ratings: ****

Wish On a Unicorn

Author: Karen Hesse

Publisher: Holt

Year: 1991

Pages: 108

Grade Range: Intermediate

Main Character: Mags or Maggie

Character with MRDD: Hannie, Mag's younger sister who has mental retardation

Plot: Sixth-grader Mags carries a lot of responsibility for her two younger siblings, Moochie and Hannie, which interferes with her desire to become one of the popular girls at school. One day, one of the popular girls invites Mags to her home after school. She agrees and in doing so sends her younger sister, Hannie, to walk home alone. By the time Mags arrives home, no one else is there. In a panic she searches for Hannie.

Content regarding MRDD: Characteristics; Language skills; Impact on family; Causes; Anoxia

Content regarding other curricular areas: Unicorns; Superstitions; Theft; Fears; Domestic violence; Popularity; Embarrassment; Bullies; Responsibility

Analysis: This book provides a good example of the impact of a child with MRDD on his/her sibling. Hannie's older sister, Mags initially resents having to care for her and for the embarrassment she brings to her. One day Hannie becomes frightened on the school playground and wets her pants. The other children laugh at her and Mags chooses to help her sister rather than her initial thought of running away. Hannie is described as looking like "normal," almost eight years old. Yet, she can't read her own name and she talks "baby talk" to the point where only her family can understand her. The cause of her disability is described as not getting enough air to breathe when she was born. Hannie attends the same school as her older sister, but it is unclear if she is in a general or special education classroom.

Recommendations/Ratings: ****

APPENDIX

B

ACTIVITIES FOR USING CHILDREN'S LITERATURE INCLUDING CHARACTERS WITH MRDD

Student's Name: _____ Date: _____

Title: _____

Author: _____ Year: _____

Awareness Activity: Compare and Contrast the Character's and Student's Characteristics

Directions: After reading the book, complete the table comparing and contrasting at least five characteristics of one character with one student in your class (this person could be yourself!).

Compare	
Character's Name:	Student's Name:
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

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Compare	
Character's Name:	Student's Name:
4.	4.
5.	5.

Contrast	
Character's Name:	Student's Name:
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

Student's Name: _____ Date: _____

Title: _____

Author: _____ Year: _____

Awareness Activity: Compare and contrast characters with similar disabilities from two books.

Directions: After reading the two books, complete the table comparing and contrasting the characters with similar disabilities.

Book: _____ Book: _____

Character's Name: _____ Character's Name: _____

Compare	
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

Contrast	
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

Student's Name: _____ Date: _____

Title: _____

Author: _____ Year: _____

Understanding Activity: Create a collage depicting the experiences and feelings of the child with a disability.

Directions: List the experiences and feelings of the character with a disability. Find pictures that represent these experiences and feelings. Cut or tear these out and arrange to make a collage.

Experiences:	
Feelings:	

Student's Name: _____ Date: _____

Title: _____

Author: _____ Year: _____

Understanding Activity: Write the author of the book asking why he/she included a character with a disability.

Directions: After reading a book including a character with a disability,

☐ Find the author's address _____

Postal: _____

Electronic: _____

☐ Draft the letter, including:

- letterhead return address
- author's name/address
- date
- greeting
- introductory paragraph (who you are)
- request (why you are writing)
- concluding paragraph (how the author can respond, thanks
- salutation
- your name

☐ Have a peer critique your letter.

☐ Revise the letter.

☐ Send the letter.

Student's Name: _____ Date: _____

Title: _____

Author: _____ Year: _____

Acceptance Activity: Keep a reflection journal.

Directions: After you have read:

- ☐ one chapter
- ☐ ___ pages
- ☐ for one day
- ☐ for one week
- ☐ the entire book

Write in your response journal about:

- ☐ whatever you want to write regarding your reactions to the book
- ☐ how you would feel if you were a particular character
- ☐ what you would do if you were in a similar situation (describe the situation)
- ☐ how you have learned to accept or understand a character better

After you have completed your reflection journal, submit it to

- ☐ the teacher
- ☐ a student in this class who has not read this book
- ☐ a student in this class who has read this book

- ☐ Within one week, request a reply from the reviewer of your reflection journal.

Student's Name: _____ Date: _____

Title: _____

Author: _____ Year: _____

Acceptance Activity: Assess your attitudes towards persons with disabilities.

Directions:

☐ Before you read this book, answer the following questions (adapted from *Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons Scale*, Yuker, Block, & Campbell, 1960).

___ Yes ___ No Students who have special needs may sometimes be just as intelligent as non-disabled people.

___ Yes ___ No People who have special needs are usually easier to get along with than other people.

___ Yes ___ No Most people who have special needs feel sorry for themselves.

___ Yes ___ No There shouldn't be special classes for people who have special needs.

___ Yes ___ No It would be best for persons who have special needs to live and work in special places.

___ Yes ___ No Most people who have special needs worry a lot.

___ Yes ___ No People who have special needs are as happy as non-disabled people.

___ Yes ___ No People who have special needs tend to keep to themselves much of the time.

___ Yes ___ No You have to be careful of what you say when you are with people who have special needs.

___ Yes ___ No People with special needs are often grouchy.

☐ After reading this book, answer the questions again.

___ Yes ___ No Students who have special needs may sometimes be just as intelligent as non-disabled people.

___ Yes ___ No People who have special needs are usually easier to get along with than other people.

___ Yes ___ No Most people who have special needs feel sorry for themselves.

___ Yes ___ No There shouldn't be special classes for people who have special needs.

___ Yes ___ No It would be best for persons who have special needs to live and work in special places.

___ Yes ___ No Most people who have special needs worry a lot.

___ Yes ___ No People who have special needs are as happy as non-disabled people.

___ Yes ___ No People who have special needs tend to keep to themselves much of the time.

___ Yes ___ No You have to be careful of what you say when you are with people who have special needs.

___ Yes ___ No People with special needs are often grouchy.

☐ Compare your answers. How did your attitudes change or remain the same as a result of reading this book?

Changed	Remained the Same

Student's Name: _____ Date: _____

Title: _____

Author: _____ Year: _____

Retelling Activity: Create a roller-movie to retell the story.

Directions: Illustrate scenes from the story on a long piece of shelf paper. Attach each end of the paper to a dowel rod. Cut a TV screen out of a cardboard box and insert the dowel rod in the top/bottom of the TV set. Show the appropriate scene as you retell the story.

Scenes To Depict	How These Scenes Will Be Illustrated

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Student's Name: _____ Date: _____

Title: _____

Author: _____ Year: _____

Retelling Activity: Retell the story using a different time period as a part of the setting.

Directions: Suppose the story took place

- ☐ 10
- ☐ 25
- ☐ 50
- ☐ 100
- ☐ 200

years ago. Write a summary of how the characters, setting, theme, and plot may have differed from the author's depiction.

	Author's Depiction	Your Depiction
Characters		
Setting		
Theme		
Plot		

Student's Name: _____ Date: _____

Title: _____

Author: _____ Year: _____

Evaluation Activity: Mock Children's Literature Award

Directions: After reading several books including a child with a disability, use the attached criteria to evaluate each book. Tally the results among the class and prepare a mock ceremony to announce the winners. Students can work in the following groups:

- ☐ Research Group—locate and acquire books
- ☐ Evaluation Group—prepare evaluation survey, tabulate results
- ☐ Awards Group—design and develop award certificates
- ☐ Ceremony Group—develop procedures for award ceremony, conduct ceremony

Student's Name: _____ Date: _____

Title: _____

Author: _____ Year: _____

Evaluation Activity: Write compare/contrast reviews.

Directions: After reading the book, write a brief review including what you did and did not like about the book. Then read one published review. Obtain an informal review from a parent of a child with the same type of disability of the character in the book you read. Compare the three reviews.

Personal Review	Published Review	Parent's Review

APPENDIX

C

DOLLY GRAY AWARD FOR CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN MRDD

What is the Dolly Gray Children's Literature Award?

The Division of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (MRDD) of the Council for Exceptional Children has initiated a new award to recognize fictional children's books with positive portrayals of individuals with mental retardation and developmental disabilities. This award is a result of collaboration between MRDD members, the MRDD Board of Directors, and Special Needs Project (a distributor of books related to disability issues) to highlight children's books related to the field and to the mission of the MRDD. This award is funded both by MRDD and Special Needs Project.

This award will be presented biennially to the author/illustrator of one picture book and one chapter book that includes a character with MRDD. A selection will review the eligible books for (a) sensitive portrayal of the character(s) with MRDD, (b) literary quality of the text, and (c) illustrations. Quality characterization of the individual with MRDD includes accuracy (e.g., not super- or subhuman, avoids stereotypic portrayals, use of person-first language); exemplary practices (e.g., emphasizes similarities between characters with/without MRDD, depicts character(s) with MRDD in integrated settings); emotional reaction (e.g., promotes empathy not pity, and acceptance, not ridicule), and overall impact (e.g., promotes positive images, respect, self-determination and contributions of person(s) with MRDD).

Who is Dolly Gray?

Dolly's father, Hod Gray, relates her story: "Dolly Sharpe Gray was born September 20, 1971, at Columbia Presbyterian, New York City.

She was diagnosed as having severe quadriplegic athetoid cerebral palsy, but we thought of her as having red hair, a bright disposition, and a lot of determination. We consulted a prominent pediatric neurologist, who wincingly described Dolly's prospects for the future. He advised institutionalization. His assessment of Dolly's condition, full of imponderables, wasn't far from being wrong. His advice, on the other hand, would have been tragically wrong if his parents hadn't ignored it. It would have deprived Dolly, her family, and all those who knew her of the opportunities of their lives.

People liked Dolly, and she returned their interest. Her good looks and generous smile helped, but what really enamored others was a positive force in her personality. She was forgiving, and considering her position and the mistakes of those around her, that was a blessing.

Her story wasn't one of superhuman achievement. Her achievements *were* human—fully and sweetly human, scared sometimes but never fearful, generous and open to others, forgiving and embracing toward life.

In some other time-track she would have taken ballet, or played the violin or guitar, like one of her grandmothers. But her Cerebral Palsy prevented her from doing these things. However, when professionals were speculating about her eyesight ("maybe she's blind"), she learned to read. When others were wondering if she "got it" at school, she learned to do grade-level work on a computer at home. She taught her teachers. She taught her friends and her parents. She was generous and brave in the lessons she taught.

Dolly was a fighter, but she was also a reader. Books played a large role in her life, because—as they do for so many children--they helped bring her the world. She read every day, often many times. Books brought her pleasure, and knowledge, and she learned from them. We set up a switch so she could activate her Library of Congress half-speed tape player. Using the tape player and an electric page-turner, she could listen to a book by herself. She particularly liked books with characters with a disability. Characters with whom she could identify—naturally—just made her light up!

A few months short of her 18th birthday, she developed a respiratory inflammation. Children get colds, and some of them are severe. She died in her sleep in the Spring of 1989.

With the assistive technology and the educational and civic advances available now, life would surely have given more to Dolly if she were alive today. Her abilities were never liberated, never tested, and her wishes, some of them, never fulfilled. But *she* gave all that she had. She lived life fully as it was given to her to do, and she never gave up, until her life ended."

Dolly Gray Award Eligibility

To be eligible for the Dolly Gray Children's Literature Award, books must meet the following criteria: (a) inclusion of a character with mental retardation or developmental disabilities, (b) recognized as a picture book or chapter book written for children or young adults in story format, (c) non-fiction books are not included, and (d) published within a two-year period prior to the presentation of the award (e.g., published between 1997-1998 for the 2000 award).

The books that met these criteria for the 2000 award include:

Big Brother Dustin. Carter, Alden R. (1997). Whitman.

The Boy Who Swam in the Stars. Eichelberger, Derrick. (1998). Mad Dog Publishing.

Emily in Love. Goldman-Rubin, Susan. (1997). Harcourt Brace & Company.

The Hangashore. Butler, Geoff. (1998). Tundra.

Heartless Hero. Baer, Judy. (1997). Bethany House.

Ian's Walk. Lears, Laurie. (1998). Whitman.

Nolan's Dream. Tingley, Janice R. (1997). J. R. Tingley.

Radiance Descending. Fox, Paula. (1997). D K Publishing.

Trevor Trevor. Twachtman-Cullen, Diane. (1998). Starfish Specialty.

Tru Confessions. Tashjian, Janet. (1997). Holt.

Under the Shadow of Wings. Banks, Sarah Harrell. (1997). Simon & Schuster.

We'll Paint the Octopus Red. Stuve-Bodeen, Stephanie. (1998). Woodbine House.

The Wild Kid, Mazer, Harry & Lanion, Deborah (illustrator). (1998). Simon & Schuster.

2000 Dolly Gray Award Recipients

Picture Book: *Ian's Walk*

Chapter Book: *Tru Confessions*

What Impact Might This Award Have On The Education And Treatment Of Individuals With MRDD?

The framers and sponsors of this award believe the Dolly Gray Award can make a great impact toward the general public's recognition of the positive societal contributions of individuals with MRDD, greater understanding and acceptance of teachers and school-aged peers of students with MRDD, and encouragement of authors and illustrators to publish quality literature including characters with MRDD.

About the Authors

Tina Taylor Dyches, Ed. D., earned her doctorate from Illinois State University in 1995. She is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Counseling Psychology and Special Education at Brigham Young University and serves as the coordinator for the certification program in Severe Disabilities.

Dr. Dyches has worked in the field of mental retardation/developmental disabilities for 14 years, both as a special educator and as a teacher educator. She has given many presentations regarding the use of children's literature with characters with disabilities and uses children's books in all of her university classes. Dr. Dyches is known for her research and work in the area of autism and family adaptation to children with disabilities.

Mary Anne Prater, Ph. D., earned her doctorate from Utah State University in 1987. She is currently a Professor and Chair of the Department of Special Education at the University of Hawaii in Manoa. She has been in the field of special education for over 20 years, having taught students with special needs in the public schools and preservice special educators at the university level.

Dr. Prater's interest in children's literature was sparked while completing her M.S. in special education and working part-time in a children's room of a public library. She has written extensively in the areas of self-management training, teacher education, multicultural issues, and children's literature.

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